

the guardian weekly

December 2011

Level » Lower intermediate
Style » Lesson plan



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: advanced and lower intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly/. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

Confused cleaner ruins \$1.1m sculpture

Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

Instructions

Lesson focus: reading, notetaking, articles

Materials: copies of the article

Time: 60 minutes

- 1 Tell students they are going to read a news story. Write up the key facts: **who** a cleaner, **where** a museum, **what** a sculpture, **why** dirty, **how much** \$1.1m. In groups students imagine what happens. Each group feeds back. **10 mins**
- 2 Pre-teach: *be on loan to, to spread, a layer of, a collector, a grease stain, to mop away*. **4 mins**
- 3 Distribute the article. Students look at the headline/photo and quickly read the whole text to see if their ideas were similar. Class feedback. What is the theme? Modern art cleaning disasters. **8 mins**
- 4 Direct students to the Art Disasters Grid. Students read the article again and make notes in each row about the four disasters. Class feedback. **10 mins**
Answers: 1 Martin Kippenberger, German, 2011, Dortmund, ruined a bucket. 2 Joseph Beuys, German, 1986, Düsseldorf, mopped away a grease stain. 3 Gustav Metzger, German, 2004, London, threw away a plastic bag. 4 Damien Hirst, British, 2001, London, cleared away bottles etc.
- 5 Look back at the first three paragraphs. Ask:
a What different words are used to refer to the artwork? Why?
b What happens to the use of articles (a/the)? Why?
c What other examples of this can you find? **6 mins**
- 6 Students write a short parallel article based on the Damien Hirst story in the final paragraph. They imagine it is the day after and begin: A caretaker in London has ruined a ... Remind them to use articles and present perfect/past simple appropriately. Give the students extra facts: the artwork was worth over \$150,000, known as *Untitled (2001)*, in an exhibition called *Painting by Numbers*. For more information go to the website: bit.ly/sYZglY1 **12 mins**
- 7 Write up: *Is modern art rubbish?* Ask the class if they agree or disagree. Put students into pairs with someone of a similar opinion. Each pair writes three reasons why they agree/disagree. Monitor. As a class elicit ideas from students who agree, then those who disagree. Encourage debate. **10 mins**

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Materials sheet

Article: Confused cleaner ruins \$1.1m sculpture



Martin Kippenberger's 'dirty' work

1 A cleaner in Germany has ruined a piece of modern art worth \$1.1m because she thought it was dirty.

2 The sculpture was by the German artist Martin Kippenberger, who was regarded as one of the most talented artists of his generation until his death in 1997. The artwork was on loan to the Ostwall Museum in Dortmund.

adding that it was on loan to the museum from a private collector.

3 The work, called *When It Starts Dripping From the Ceiling*, comprised a rubber bucket placed under a wooden tower. Inside the bucket, Kippenberger had spread a layer of paint to represent dried rainwater. He thought it was art: the cleaner saw it as a challenge, and she decided to make the bucket look like new.

4 A spokeswoman for the museum said the female cleaner "removed the paint from the four walls of the bucket".

5 "It is now impossible to return it to its original state," she said,

6 She said that cleaners were told to keep 20cm away from artworks, but it was unclear if the woman in question had received this information.

7 Kippenberger is not the only artist to have his works ruined by cleaners. In 1986, a "grease stain" by the German Joseph Beuys valued at \$550,000 was mopped away at the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf.

8 At least the artwork didn't end up in a bin. In 2004, a cleaner at Tate Britain in London threw away part of a work by another German artist, Gustav Metzger. The cleaner didn't realise that a plastic bag containing paper and cardboard was an important part of the artwork and not just some rubbish.

9 Germans are not the only victims. In 2001, British artist Damien Hirst lost a pile of beer bottles, ashtrays and coffee cups, meant to represent the life of an artist, when a caretaker at the Eyestorm Gallery in London cleared it away.

Original article by Helen Pidd, rewritten by Janet Hardy-Gould

Student task

Art Disasters Grid.

Read the article again and make notes in each row about the four disasters

	Name of Artist	Nationality	Year	City	What the cleaner did
Disaster 1					
Disaster 2					
Disaster 3					
Disaster 4					